

them the work of destroying derelict vessels on the great lines of Atlantic travel, England taking the half of the space between her and mid-ocean and the Republic the western half. Strictly speaking, neither country has any authority for undertaking this work outside of the three mile limit; but the old doctrine of the duty of maintaining the police of the seas, though it be against derelicts in default of pirates, might here not inappropriately come in, and in its performance a division of responsibility might well be agreed upon, for England no longer assumes the duty of ocean police over "the four seas." And the time has passed when any theoretical claims to exercise the supervision could be a cause of contention. What England now contends is that these derelicts do not often cause injury to steamers, and that the loss of property resulting from the few cases that do occur is not sufficient to warrant the arrangement proposed by the United States for their removal. It is not asserted that no danger exists from this cause, but only that it is not great enough to call for an extraordinary remedy. At present the derelicts within the three mile limits of the United States are destroyed by torpedoes and ramming; but for operation beyond the territorial limits, and as ramming is not without danger, it was proposed that each country should be provided with special apparatus in the shape of an ocean steamer, with derricks and hoists, to aid in bringing to port vessels which contain some remnants of value. If two nations ought to make themselves active in clearing the ocean of these partially submerged dangers, why not others, which are, if not equally, interested? Or how would it do for the maritime nations to authorize derelict destroyers and savers, on some reasonable conditions, to get what they could out of the abandoned vessels and shatter the rest to fragments?

Once more the curious plan of setting up an Irish republic, by means of fiery orations in the United States, is being put into practice. There has been a gathering of Irish representatives in Chicago, 1,000 strong, comprising the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Clan-Na-Gael, and similar organizations. The avowed intention of the speakers is the complete separation of Ireland from England, and the telegrams sent in from over the sea were all in unison with this design. There is an undercurrent of suspicion that, to a large extent, the movement is intended to produce an effect on American politics. However that may be, it looks somewhat formidable, judging from the number of delegates that attended, though nobody believes that it is going to achieve Irish independence. One effect it may have on the funds of the Irish parliamentary party, if the view expressed in a despatch sent from California should prevail. It was to the effect that the senders were willing to give freely of their money to make Ireland an independent republic, but not a cent for parliamentary agitation. However much Irish pockets may bleed, the stream will not support the grand army of Liberation and keep up the parliamentary subsidies. In fact, the two things cannot co-exist: the physical force party will supersede the parliamentary, if it is to be anything more than a great school of Irish oratory of the blatant kind. The orators evidently think the time opportune for talk, if not for action. One of them found comfort in the belief that France, Germany and Russia all hate England. But the ostentatious clasp- ing of hands by France and Russia must cause Germany to think of her own safety when she listens to the Gallic cry of *revanche*. What is perhaps to be feared is that Ireland may soon be found shuddering under another dynamite campaign. But a dynamite campaign will not establish the republic.

## THE TRUNK LINES TRAFFIC ASSOCIATION.

Light has at length been thrown upon what has been called the Great Trunk Lines Railway Pool, though its official name is the Union Traffic Association, which is as nearly as the facts will permit a colorless title. The public, always suspicious of arrangements among railway companies which have for their object the prevention of competition, was inclined to censure the movement even before the details were known. The general plan was drawn up as early as the 8th July; but the difficulty of finding for it general acceptance, even among the companies themselves, has been formidable. The weak lines feared that they would be sacrificed. The scheme proposed to relieve the railroads of the trouble of making rates, and to hand over to a committee of nine, composed of the presidents of the roads, power to fix and maintain rates. The coercive power of enforcement was first put in the form of fines: \$5,000 for each deviation from the rates fixed; and to make sure of the collection, there was to be a deposit in advance of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the earnings to meet such forfeits. The percentage was afterwards reduced to 1 instead of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and the maximum limit was dropped out, increasing the menace of forfeiture to an amount exceeding \$5,000 for each offence. This was done by a committee of eight appointed to hear objections and try to obtain a general agreement. The committee has always to keep in view what is possible and what is not possible to be done under the laws of the United States, and the companies' solicitors are called upon to do some difficult steering between the rocks. There is, we are told, no intention to evade the law. It is admitted that there is no power to make an actual division of tonnage or receipts. The thing is to do it in effect without breaking the law which forbids it. Should the agreement go into effect, it will probably be productive of a heavy crop of law suits, with varying results, and verdicts generally against the roads.

When Sir Charles Rivers Wilson spoke in favor of pooling the revenues of the trunk lines of railway, he doubtless had in his mind what was then actually going on. This movement has been going on since the month of June. In the proposed arrangement both the great Canadian railways are represented. Harmonious relations between these two companies are reported by the American press, on what authority we know not, to have been brought about; though it is difficult to believe that an understanding between them has now, for the first time, been come to. The Grank Trunk and the Canadian Pacific companies will find it difficult, under our laws, to make any close alliance, almost as difficult as the American trunk lines will find it to make a rateable distribution of traffic and revenue among themselves in the face of the law which forbids their doing so. In defence of the Trunk Line Association, it is said that the object is not to raise rates, but to maintain them in a stable condition. This is, at least, an admission that the object is to eliminate from railway traffic the element of competition. That competition sometimes takes on a destructive form, is unreasonable and relentless, cannot be denied. But is the only cure for competition its own destruction? The destruction of competition is only a means of arriving at an end: a system of pooling which takes on the forms of an organized monopoly. Is there no medium between destructive competition and no competition at all?

—The United Counties Exhibition of Cumberland, Colchester, Pictou and Antigonish, will be held at New Glásgow, Nova Scotia, October 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th.